Forest Service

Southwestern Region
Regional Office

333 Broadway SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102
FAX (505) 842-3800
V/TTY (505) 842-3292

File Code: 3420 **Date:** January 9, 2008
Route To:

Subject: Palomas Trailhead Hazard Tree Report

To: Jon Williams, District Ranger, Cuba Ranger District

This is a summary of my visit to the Palomas Trailhead I made with David Allen, Recreation Staff, Cuba Ranger District on October 31, 2006. The purpose of this visit was to determine if there were any hazard trees at the Palomas Trailhead and if the tree that failed could have been identified as potentially hazardous prior to its failing on May 22, 2006.

Based on my walk-through evaluation of the trees at the Palomas Trailhead (Figure 1),

Figure 1. Palomas Trailhead 2006

I found, no dead or dying trees and no trees with defects that could be classified as a hazard. Defects include but are not limited to dead tops, dead branches, trees with up-lifting roots and trees with bole and or root rots. However, none of these defects were observed during this survey. In addition, in order for trees to be classified as potentially hazardous, not only must

they have a noticeable defect that would result in their or its parts failing, there must also be a target such as a parking pad, table, permanent structure, or high use trail or road at the site. Although some woodborer and woodpecker activity was observed on the bole and stem of the failed tree Figures 2, 3, and 4), woodborers were not the cause of the tree's failure. Woodborers generally invade dead and dying trees and are considered and are considered to be of secondary importance.

Figure 2. Looking North.

Figure 3. Looking South.

Figure 4. Bole showing woodpecker feeding activity.

David and I believe the trees failure was primarily due to wind stress. The Palomas area is subject to constant, high winds that might have caused internal stress to the tree, weakening its integrity (heartwood) over time, eventually causing it to fail during a wind event. It would not be surprising if more trees at this trailhead failed during future wind storms. Unfortunately, there is no visible way to detect this kind of wind-caused defect. If I had been requested to do a hazard tree rating of this tree before it failed, I would not have classified this tree as a hazard tree since I would not have seen any signs of defect. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (505) 842-3284 or mailto:trogers@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Terrence J. Rogers
TERRENCE J. ROGERS
Entomologist, Forest Health, New Mexico Zone

cc: Diane Taliaferro
Steve F Romero
Joan Hellen
Debra Allen-Reid
David A Conklin